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Deconstructing Hierarchies

Yüksel, Deniz

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Editors

Prof. Dr. David Chiavacci, Prof. Dr. Mareile Flitsch,
PD Dr. Simone Müller, lic. phil. Roman Benz

English Language Editor

Phillip Lasater, M.Div.

Articles by

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Behr
Professor of Chinese Studies, University of
Zurich
Roman Benz, lic. phil.
Academic associate at the URPP Asia and Europe
Prof. Dr. Ivana Buljan
Professor of Chinese Culture and Language,
University of Zagreb
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Zurich / URPP Asia and Europe

Prof. Dr. Mareile Flitsch

Academic Director of the URPP Asia and Europe/
Professor of Social and Cultural Anthropology,
Director Ethnographic Museum, University of
Zurich

Dr. Lisa Indraccolo

Postgraduate student at the Department of
Asian and Oriental Studies, Chinese Studies,
University of Zurich / URPP Asia and Europe

Phillip Lasater, M.Div.

Research and teaching assistant at the Institute
of Theology, University of Zurich

Silva Lieberherr, M.Sc.

Doctoral student at the Department of
Geography, Division of Human Geography,
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Polina Lukicheva, M.A.

Doctoral student at the URPP Asia and Europe

Prof. Dr. David Mervart

Professor of Japanese History, Universidad
Autónoma de Madrid

Christoph Mittmann, M.A.

Doctoral student at the URPP Asia and Europe

Dr. Julia Obinger

Research and teaching assistant at the
Department of Asian and Oriental Studies,
Japanese Studies, University of Zurich

Dr. James Weaver

Postgraduate student at the Department of
Asian and Oriental Studies, Islamic and Middle
Eastern Studies, University of Zurich / URPP Asia
and Europe

Dr. Martina Wernsdörfer

Curator of the Asia collections, Ethnographic
Museum at the University of Zurich

Deniz Yüksel, M.A.

Research and teaching assistant at the
Department of Asian and Oriental Studies,
Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies / Gender
Studies, University of Zurich

Cover

Members of the protest movement "Svabhimani
Shetkari Sanghatana" in Nagpur (Maharashtra,
India)

Photo: Silva Lieberherr

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David Mervart (p. 5), Roman Benz (pp. 7–9,
24–25), Ethnographic Museum at the University
of Zurich (p. 21)

Editorial

Dear Readers,



It is our honor and great pleasure to take over the URPP Asia and Europe as academic directors. We wish to start our term by thanking our predecessors in office, Prof. Dr. Ulrich Rudolph (January 2006 – December 2007), Prof.

Dr. Andrea Büchler and Prof. Dr. Christoph Uehlinger (January 2008 – July 2010), Prof. Dr. Andrea Riemenschneider (August 2010 – December 2012) as well as Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Behr and Prof. Dr. Angelika Malinar (January 2013 – December 2014). They have all contributed to the development and maturing of the URPP Asia and Europe and it is thanks to their efforts and commitment in cooperation with all other participating professors that we take over a dynamic organization that is fully up and running. This is the basis on which we will be able to do our job in the coming years, and we very much hope that we will be able to successfully steer the URPP for all its members and associates through a fruitful and inspiring final spurt until 2017.

The URPP Asia and Europe looks back on a very active and successful year 2014. Our annual events schedule included two public lecture series on cultural materiality and on current political affairs and civil society in Japan. It also included eight workshops and conferences telling about the broad thematic range of research at the URPP Asia and Europe, from social movements and civil society to inter-subjectivity and eco-theory to “Concepts of Concept.” Two international conferences deserve special mention. The “23rd European Conference on South Asian Studies” (ECSAS) in July 2014 attracted more than 500 scholars and comprised more than 50 panels and 400 presented papers. This conference was realized in cooperation with the Department of Geography and the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies – Indian Studies. We have to thank the two convenors and URPP members Prof. Dr. Ulrike Müller-Böker and Prof. Dr. Angelika Malinar as well as their supporting team. The second event, the yearly URPP conference “Asia and Europe in Translation: Interdisciplinary Perspectives,” in November 2014, included more than 20 papers and hosted participants from all over the world. It was conceptualized and organized by Prof. Dr. Hans B. Thomsen

and his team. Of course, such a program could only be realized thanks to successfully attracting third-party funding. Furthermore, we congratulate many of our members for effectively raising funding for their research projects, especially Dr. Dagmar Wujastyk for her successful application for an ERC Starting Grant. Regarding our doctoral program, we congratulate Patrick Brozzo, Laura Coppens, Justyna Jaguścik, Pia Hollenbach, Rohit Jain, Rita Krajnc, and Matthäus Rest who have successfully defended their PhD theses since 2014. And we congratulate Prof. Dr. Almut Höfert for her successful habilitation review in April 2014.

In a slightly sad mood, we say good-bye to several colleagues who left the URPP Asia and Europe during 2014. Prof. Dr. Sven Trakulhun and now Prof. Dr. Ralph Weber have, as senior researchers at the URPP, contributed greatly to its development (for further information and acknowledgment see pp. 22–23 of this bulletin). We thank them both for their crucial and tireless contributions and endless stimulating inputs and count on future fruitful cooperation with them. Fortunately, the number of the participating professors is still increasing. We are happy to welcome Prof. Dr. Annuska Derks, Prof. Dr. Francine Giese, Prof. Dr. Johannes Quack, and Prof. Dr. Rafael Walthert as new members of the URPP Asia and Europe.

All good things sooner or later come to an end. As mentioned, the URPP is entering its final phase until 2017. It will be our main task to retain the added value that the URPP Asia and Europe has contributed to the University of Zurich. It has substantially contributed to the cohesion among our disciplines focusing on Asia as well as to the idea and research of transdisciplinary research between philologies, humanities, social sciences and law at the University of Zurich. One result has been the new founding of the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies. Reflections on the benefits and difficulties of transdisciplinary research has led to heightened sensitivity and an increasing interest in dialogue and cooperation and we will take efforts to exploit all possibilities to generate new institutionalized forms of transdisciplinary cooperation in postgraduate education and research. For the coming years, we count ourselves, as well as the URPP, lucky to be able to rely on our well-proven professional staff, with the support of whom we will continue tried and tested, as well as new, strategies of communication, of research-support and academic dialogue, and of submitting proposals for future cooperation and potential projects.

Prof. Dr. David Chiavacci and Prof. Dr. Mareile Flitsch

Sketching Maps of a Eurasian Republic of Letters

In September 2014, David Mervart was a visiting scholar at the URPP Asia and Europe. He held a seminar and a lecture on current tendencies towards a "global" approach in the humanities. In this essay, he explains his concept of an intellectual historiography that carefully follows the winding paths of ideas between Asia and Europe.

David Mervart



Over recent years, histories of intellectual life have increasingly turned to theoretical and methodological ruminations on the possibility or necessity of going "global." A host of attributes serves as an index to this tendency: "intercultural," "cross-cultural," "transcultural," "transnational," "entangled," "world comparative," and "global" *tout court*. Such terms have been variously floated as desirable modifiers of the agenda of intellectual or conceptual history. The purpose might be actually to turn the gaze toward objects and processes on a planet-wide scale, which sounds daunting. Or—perhaps more usefully and manageably—to try and build frameworks and approaches that would better do justice to our sense that the position of "the West" as the sole origin and anchor of universalisable modes of knowledge can no longer be tacitly taken for granted. Either way, this trend is worth interrogating, since it is driving some of the most momentous developments in the field.

In September 2014, I had the honour and pleasure to be invited by the URPP Asia and Europe to Zurich as the year's visiting scholar and to address the above issues in a research

seminar and a public talk organised by the institute. In a group of young researchers and doctoral candidates, we read and discussed some of the recent theoretical and methodological articulations of such "global" or border-crossing pretensions of intellectual and conceptual histories, including texts by Cemil Aydin, Anthony Grafton, Christopher Hill, Sudipta Kaviraj, Andrew Sartori, James Secord, or Sanjay Subrahmanyam. And since such articulations are certainly meant to connect to our practices as scholars, at each step we tried to test them on the material of our own research. The seminar participants brought in an intriguing array of research interests and dissertation projects, ranging from private scholars in Tokugawa Japan who sought to synthesize Copernican astronomy and classical Confucian moral cosmology, through women's groups magazines inspired by European models under the late Ottoman empire, to the cultural adaptations and normative legal deployments of the concept of 'human rights' in parts of the non-Western world.

A new toolbox

Each of these case studies obviously poses a challenge regarding the framework of organising the research and the questions asked of the material under study. How do we avoid reductionist assumptions about 'western

impact' and 'eastern reception'? How do we do justice, descriptively and analytically, to the complexity of the processes of translation of one conceptual vocabulary into the terms of another, very different one? What analytical language might help us avoid essentialising cultural or ethnic identities and positing them as explanatory givens rather than problems to be explained? How can we dodge the trap of methodological nationalism? With these on our mind, we queried the new toolbox of generalisations, intuitions, descriptive vocabularies and narrative strategies proposed by our authors. Above all, we tried to see how helpful it might be in sketching histories of knowledge-formation and intellectual engagements that transgress the boundaries of supposedly stable cultural and linguistic units, including the latter-day nation states, whose claim extends so intrusively over the past of most recorded human experience.

Units of conversation

The problem clearly is that the existing blinders of established academic disciplines render certain instances of intellectual activity invisible, or at least much less visible than other instances deemed more typical and representative. Thus a record of a conversation among three French Enlightenment salon-goers or an instance of a Song interpretation of a pre-Han classic constitute units of historical material that readily pop up into the field of vision of, respectively, a historian of French Enlightenment and a classical Sinologist and are respectively filed away as material of 'Enlightenment' and 'Chinese' intellectual history. And having established disciplines to look after them, such instances as these are likely to

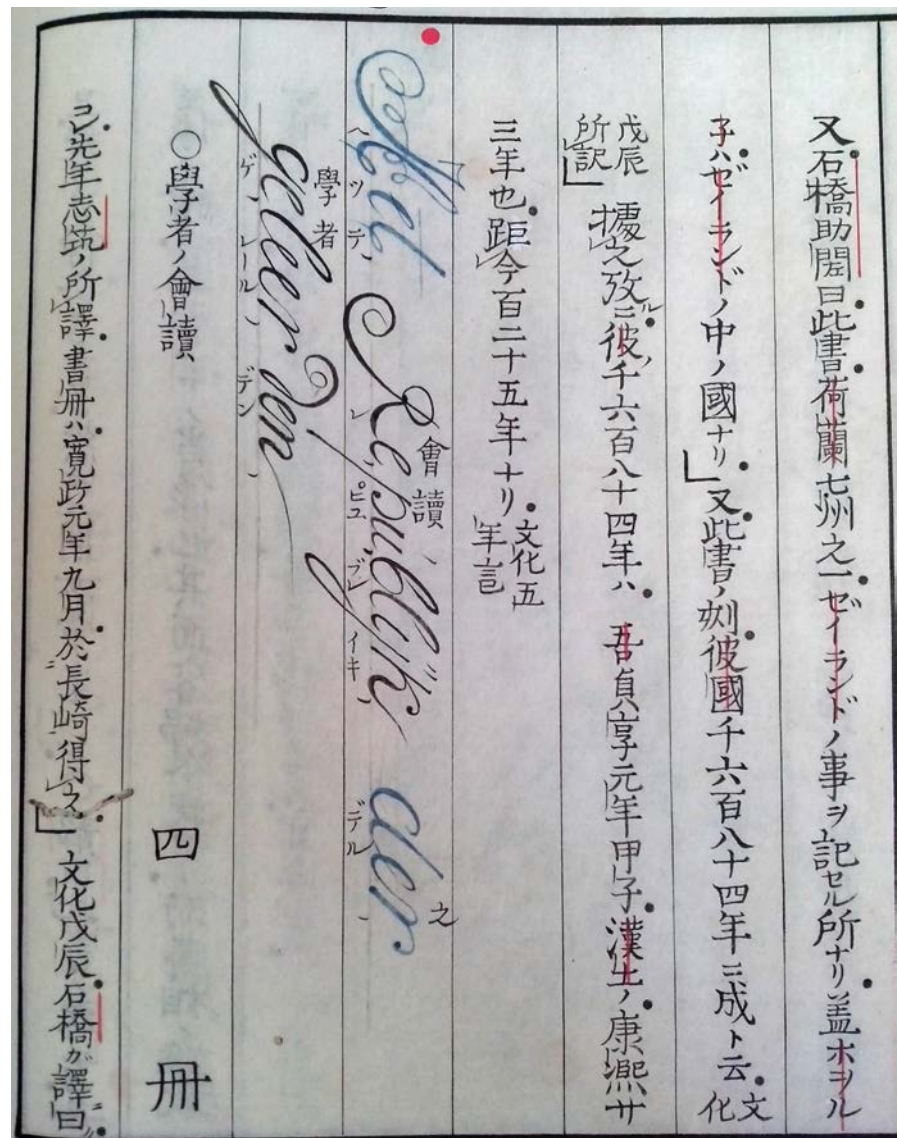
receive sufficient coverage to become part of textbook narratives that trickle through popular accounts into common awareness.

But consider by contrast a conversation involving, say, a 'Chinese' text (the result of a Song re-interpretation of a canonised Han text with a pinch of Buddhist metaphysics), its Jesuit translation deployed back in Europe as part of the campaign to justify the order's missionary policy, a Parisian salon-going deist quoting the same Jesuit translation, a Rotterdam-based reviewer's excerpt of the work of that French *philosophe* and finally a Japanese interpreter's use of the Dutch review to make sense of a fluid geopolitical situation following the war between the British and the Qing empires over imports of Bengali opium.

Such a unit of conversation is something that few of us are trained by our disciplines to even notice, let alone to describe and theorize. To students and lay publics alike it does not represent an intuitive instance of intellectual activity, making it much harder for it to enter any textbook-level general portrayal. And yet, similar instances are everywhere in evidence and they certainly do not wait for the arrival of the telegraphy or internet and for the self-conscious 'globalization' of a recent past. There is no reason why we should consider them less representative of 'cultures' or less formative of 'traditions' than instances of conversations conducted in the same language, at the same location and by people of the same ethnic group.

Formative connections across Eurasia

These pre-modern examples of cross-border transcultural motion and communicative permeability are not few and far between. They are common, even very common. They are certainly often based on misunderstandings rather than some multiculturally tolerant accommodation, but abuse and



Entry with the translation of the title *Het Republyk der geleerden*. *Shinzō shomoku* | *Gaihen: Bansho* (The New Expanded Catalogue of the Rakusaidō Library | Outer part: Barbarian writings), Matsura shiryo hakubutsukan, Hirado, ms. VII-1 (i) 3. (Courtesy of the Matsura Historical Museum; photo D. Mervart)

wilful or wishful misunderstanding are equally frequent and culturally productive modes of communication.

If we make our default units of study a little more complex, the national frameworks of reference quickly lose their supposedly intuitive appeal. Instead of studying a 'Chinese' thinker, let us take, for example, a person from eighteenth-century Nanjing who, despite a Chinese-sounding name and unquestioned allegiance to the Qing empire, operates as an Islamic scholar primarily in classical Arabic and Persian and seeks to translate Sufi texts into the conceptual language of the

universal learning of most of the broader East Asian Sinosphere, the language of the classics we call 'Confucian.' Consider then that the resulting Chinese translation of a Sufi text is shipped by a Fujianese merchant (on a boat staffed by a motley crew of Malay sailors and a captain born of, say, a pirate of Japanese descent and a Cantonese boatpeople woman) to Nagasaki, where it is intercepted by censors as suspected Christian propaganda.

The Tokugawa censors (some of them offspring of Ming Chinese refugees from the continent) are effectively engaging in an implicit compar-

ative study of religions as they operate on the assumption that otherworldly zeal of any hue is a danger to the stability of government. This assumption is formed from a mixture of first-hand experience with certain troublesome Buddhist sects and Christian converts and of the intelligence fed diligently by Dutch and English informers, who in the seventeenth century went out of their way to convince the new Tokugawa rulers that the subjects of Spanish and Portuguese Catholic kings are a threat to their neighbours everywhere and use religion to turn places into their colonies.

The resulting crackdown on all Christian proselytism (that we now know affected, among other things, Chinese translations of Islamic texts) was regarded with considerable sympathy by a (Protestant) Westphalian doctor visiting Japan, who described these measures as amounting to a systematic policy of 'closed country,' a felicitous policy at that, conducive to the internal peace and prosperity of the Tokugawa realm. This idealised description of the example of Tokugawa Japan was really intended as a lesson to a Europe troubled by the wars of religion and ambitious conquest. The vision of a country happily and prosperously closed off from international trade (*geschlossener Handelsstaat*) reverberates through European debates for a century afterwards. But when the Westphalian doctor's Latin account of the 'closed empire' of Japan later finds its way back to Nagasaki, having been retranslated via English and Dutch into Japanese, it provides the Tokugawa authorities with a handy argument to fend off the demands to 'open up' the archipelago to international trade and diplomatic relations.

Every step of this dizzying chain of transmission, creative expropriation and adaptation of knowledge, text and argument is in fact entirely genuine and draws our attention to formative connections and translations that

spanned the whole of Eurasia long before the supposed 'globalization' ushered the new age of a world connected. Indeed, there appears to have been no locally settled, disconnected, traditional world that a recent 'globalization' could arrive to supersede. But it is by similarly contingent processes that a discursive sphere that one may plausibly call 'global' has come into being. It is probably by carefully investigating stories like the ones above that we can hope to account for the emergence of a world of knowledge that we so intuitively perceive as global.

A useful metaphor

Perhaps rather than new general paradigms we need convincing and intuitive stories with which to talk about such connections and entanglements. These stories need to be as convincing, rich and self-supporting as the stories of essential cultural identities. To amass a stock of good stories with intuitive examples may be the best way to defy the essentialising inertia embedded in our disciplines and mindsets.

For any such enterprise, however, a label is useful, even indispensable. A good metaphor would do. And indeed, a long-established metaphor does exist in the western reaches of Eurasia for such a flurry of correspondence and trafficking in texts and ideas, unfettered by political, national or linguistic boundaries. It was the republic of letters, where the 'letters' stand for every form of learning and articulate knowledge. It is a lofty and improbably noble appellation. In the event, the trafficking was not always peaceful and fair, not nearly always based on an equality of parties involved. But the republic of letters at least implies that the element of communication and conversation is key to understanding the processes of generating knowledge and making sense of the world. It invites us to take seriously the processes of translation

and transmission in all their historical contingency and to track the actual synapses along which they occurred. As metaphorical labels go, we could do worse than that.

Probably the first time the metaphor of 'republic of letters' was translated into any East Asian idiom, was in 1790s in a library catalogue in the castle town of Hirado, western Japan, under an entry on the acquisition of a Dutch journal that bore the same title: *Het Republyk der Geleerden*. The struggling translator, an official interpreter in Nagasaki, tried his best and rendered the peculiar phrase into Japanese as *kaidoku*, meaning a 'reading group' or a 'seminar.' Even as in our own seminar we tried to sketch a tentative map of some of the intellectual connections and co-productions of meaning that might be called a Eurasian republic of letters, I like to think of our reading group as a small fleeting embodiment of the republic of letters on Zürcher soil.

David Mervart

David Mervart is Professor of Japanese history at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. He received a B.A. in English literature and a M.A. in Japanese studies from the Charles University, Prague. In 2009, he earned his Ph.D. in the history of Asian political thought from the Graduate School of Law and Politics, University of Tokyo. He was a research fellow at the University of Cambridge, Centre for History and Economics (Andrew W. Mellon Prize Research Grant) and Leiden University, Modern East Asia Research Centre (NWO Rubicon fellowship). From 2009 to 2014, he was assistant professor of Japanese history at the University of Heidelberg's cluster of excellence "Asia and Europe in a Global Context." Furthermore, he is a research associate of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic.

The Rise of Religion

The “23rd European Conference on South Asian Studies” (ECSAS) was hosted from July 23 to July 26, 2014 at the University of Zurich by the Departments of Geography and Indian Studies, along with the URPP Asia and Europe. Some 500 scholars working on South Asia participated in this successful event at which more than 400 papers were presented.

The keynote speech by Professor Ratna Kapur (Jindal Global Law School) dealt with the growing influence of religion on Indian politics and law. The popularity of Hindu nationalist parties during the last two decades, especially of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, ‘Indian People’s Party’), and their assertion of “Hindutva,” an interpretation of Hinduism in the name of the country’s “Hindu majority,” endangers the rights of religious minorities, she argued. Under the pretext of defending India as a secular state, the Hindu Right is trying to introduce a so-called uniform civil code, which would replace the current plurality of religiously based personal laws for members of different communities.

The following excerpts are taken from a discussion following the keynote between Ratna Kapur, Angelika Malinar (Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies/participating professor at the URPP Asia and Europe), and Shalini Randeria (Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva/research associate at the URPP Asia and Europe).

Angelika Malinar: Ratna Kapur, you opened your keynote with the line: “Now God is out of the closet.” On the one hand, my immediate reaction was: “Was God ever in the closet?,” given the perception of India—at least for people dealing with issues of religion coming from the West like me—

as a country with a long-standing tradition of religion. On the other hand, religion seemed to me, especially in metropolitan centers like Delhi, as being perceived as if fading out eventually in a further dissemination of secularist values. Would you say that the actual importance and growing politicization of religion was underestimated by intellectuals and academics both in the West as well as in India?

Ratna Kapur: In America, in Europe, or in a postcolonial liberal democratic country like India, we can speak about God and religion quite openly, but many progressive people, who assume themselves to be liberals and feminists and define themselves as secularists, consider these as private matters, which they do not really care about. So they have not engaged with the rise of religion seriously as part of the public discourse today especially as they saw the religious Right way back in the 1980s as people who would simply go away if we just kept on chanting the mantra of secularism over and over again. I think that was a deeply flawed strategy.

Shalini Randeria: You are absolutely right. The politicization of religion and the dynamics it could and would assume was seriously underestimated by all of us then. I think this miscalculation was also based on a certain misreading of Western secularism. Indian liberals and secularists, for instance, overlooked the role religion still plays in public life in Europe and the US. And they ignored the wide variety of secularisms in the West. Unlike Indian universities, which have no departments of Hindu or Muslim theology, all German and Swiss universities have faculties of Catholic and Protestant theology as well as religious studies/comparative religion. Britain, for instance, is very differently secular from Germany. In Germany and Switzerland, the state levies a church tax on all citizens belonging to a denomination on behalf of the churches. Most Oxford and Cambridge colleges have chapels and students return to their former college chapels to wed.

Kapur: In the United States too, religion plays an important role, although the USA is seen by many as epitomizing the wall of separation between religion and state. But every presidential candidate has to prove his faith credentials if he is to have the slightest



Ratna Kapur: “The monotheistic approach to Hinduism is ironically inspired by Christianity and Islam.”

chance at the ballot box. And think of all the cases around school prayer or around Sunday closing laws or the display of the Ten Commandments in government legislative buildings. The omnipresence of religion in the US has never been acknowledged in that model of secularism and was also largely ignored in Indian discussions about the secular.

Randeria: In European countries, Christianity, the religion of the majority of the population is imperceptibly interwoven with the fabric of everyday life. It is public visibility of the religion of the migrant minorities that stirs controversy as in the case of the ban on minarets in Swiss cities. Crucifixes adorn classroom walls in southern Germany. And when some parents filed a court case objecting to this, they were told that crucifixes aren't a religious but a cultural symbol. Interestingly, this is the very same argument that the Hindu Right Wing party in India makes when it insists that Muslims must accept Ram, who should not be seen as merely a Hindu God but a cultural symbol on the Indian subcontinent. To my surprise as a student in Germany, I discovered that the academic system has merit-based scholarships that are given either through foundations affiliated

with political parties or with the Catholic and the Protestant Church. Either would be unthinkable in India as it would be considered to be a violation of secular principles. It was only during the recent controversy surrounding the then Catholic bishop of Limburg, Tebartz-van Elst, who spent millions of

“When it comes to the protection of women’s sexual integrity, most conservative groups, regardless of their religion, are utterly opposed to them, even more opposed than to rights for homosexuals.”

Ratna Kapur

Euros on renovating his residence that most people realized that his misconduct was subject to church law and not to state law. Similarly, the church as an employer of teachers, doctors and nurses in confessional kindergartens, schools or hospitals has the right to impose its own norms, which may vary from those applicable to employees in similar public institutions. While this kind of legal pluralism present but hidden from public awareness due to its association with the majority religion and its institutions, in India religiously

based legal pluralism is a hotly debated issue as the current controversy on a uniform civil code once again shows.

Malinar: The extent of state involvement in the administration of religious institutions in India only became clear to me when I started my research in and on Hindu monasteries in Orissa. I heard about all sorts of state interventions, state-controlled endowment commissions, and court cases on the right of religious communities to manage their own affairs. Most strikingly, all these monasteries can be at any time transformed from a private charity trust into a public institution, which will then be administered by the state—something that would be unimaginable in Germany. State administration of the Cologne Cathedral would be, at the moment, unthinkable. Yet, the treatment of religious institutions by Indian authorities is also quite disparate. At the local level, there are massive bureaucratic interventions in religious institutions, but more generally, the state upholds its secularist framework. Concerning education, the state increasingly leaves the field open to religious communities, which establish private schools and thereby get the opportunity to extend their influence even if they follow the curricula in force in public schools.

Kapur: I totally agree with your perception of the state’s ambiguous behavior. The interventions in religious institutions are often attempts to get hold of their financial resources. There is so much money going into these institutions and the government tries to have its share. The restraint in respect of the privatization of education has a lot to do with neo-liberalism and with the withdrawal of the state from the provision of public services. And it has shifted these public tasks into the lap of private actors. Right-wing organizations like the Vishva Hindu Parishad (‘World Hindu Council’) have seized



Angelika Malinar: “Concerning education, the state increasingly leaves the field open to religious communities.”

the opportunity and set up local schools to foster a process of indoctrination. Hindutva, which was articulated by the early ideologues of the Hindu Right in the 1920s, comprises the idea of establishing India as a Hindu state, has been the governing ideology of the Hindu Right and is being aggressively pursued through these indoctrination tools. Hindutva regards religious minorities as untrustworthy, as their fealties lie elsewhere, in Mecca or Rome. It also sets up one supreme god, Ram, and the demand for a supreme temple, at Ayodhya which is declared to be the birthplace of Ram, as the core components the faith of Hindus. This monotheistic approach to Hinduism is ironically inspired by Christianity and Islam. The whole Hindutva ideology is based on an invented tradition, that is thoroughly modern and Abrahamic.

Malinar: When I did my research on monasteries, I lived in a milieu that was part of a Krishna tradition. To my question, what they thought about the contemporary discourse on Hindutva, one monk said to me: "There is no space for a god with a flute (i.e. Krishna) right now. It's a time for the god with a sword (i.e. Rama)." In my opinion, this kind of closing the ranks against other religions is part of a unification process you can find in contemporary Hinduism.

Randeria: The conservative tendencies within all religious communities today all over the world are challenging the achievements of the past decades in the sphere of women's rights, too. It won't come as a surprise if there is under the BJP government of Prime Minister Modi a backlash on women's rights and the little progress made on gay rights so far.

Kapur: I think when the Delhi High Court¹ ended the criminalization of



Shalini Randeria: "Indian secularists overlooked the role religion still plays in public life in Europe and the US."

homosexuality in 2009, the time was ripe for this decision because public opinion had changed and become much more open with regard to this subject. The decision was not a big human rights victory, but a step in the right direction. In 2013, the Supreme Court gave full rights to transgenders. To me, these decisions represent a new trend. Even the BJP government never appealed against them, because there is nothing to be gained by fighting against the rights of LGBTs. The Hindu Right focuses instead on the implementation of a uniform civil code, as well as the removal of Article 370 in the Constitution that accords special status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir. I believe the LGBT groups should participate in the uniform civil code debate to fight for a gender-just family law, which allows same-sex marriages or alternative family relationships, for example. The whole debate is seen as a conflict between Hindu and Muslim interests, but, in my opinion, LGBTs' and women's rights are in danger too. When it comes to the protection of women's sexual integrity, most conservative groups, regardless of their religion, are utterly opposed to them, even more opposed than to rights for homosexuals.

Randeria: The Indian women's movement will probably not find much support from its counterparts in Europe and the US as here too women's movements are no longer as strong as they used to be.

Kapur: Yes, these transnational alliances are really difficult to maintain. But within India, I have seen some encouraging developments: Feminists organized the "Slut Walk" and the "Pink Panty Campaign," when women were attacked on the basis of the dresses they were wearing and what they were drinking. Although the feminist movement is diminished and feels under siege, it will perhaps find its place in more institutional forms. Some of the newer gender studies departments are doing some really exciting work now and maybe the feminist movement will take on a new incarnation. Above all, it is important to sustain the struggle. The struggle is an ongoing as India is transitioning into a neo-liberal economy and is now headed by the BJP, which is unlikely to surrender its ideology of Hindutva. New strategies are required to address this phase, and progressive groups need to rethink their forms of engagement in order to remain relevant.

A Most Important Source

In the spring semester of 2014, the public lecture series “Cultural Materiality – Concepts at Stake in Comparative Manuscript Studies” aimed at fostering a lively interdisciplinary discussion on the state of the art in the field of manuscript studies across disciplines. The lecture series tried to provide an accessible overview on most recent archaeological discoveries, manuscript collections and archives, ongoing research projects, up-to-date theories, new analytical tools, and innovative methods in the study of manuscript texts.

Lisa Indraccolo, James Weaver, Phillip Lasater

It is undisputed that the manuscript, in its wide variety of forms and physical carriers, is the primary medium of source material for studying the pre-modern world across disciplines and cultures. In the last years, newly acquired manuscript collections, recent exciting archaeological findings, and the increased accessibility of such materials thanks to concomitant progress in the digitalization and printed reproduction of texts has produced a rising interest in the study of manuscripts. In particular, studying the physical carrier of a manuscript text can yield extra-textual information about the different circumstances of manuscript production, reproduction, and transmission; the scribal communities that put these texts down in writing; and the different communication goals, uses, and audiences of such manuscript texts. Consequently, a growing awareness has developed of the potential for more dynamic interdisciplinary dialogue and an integrated approach to manuscripts, fruitfully combining philology with the study of material culture. Such an integrated approach focuses not only on the textual analysis of the extrapolated content, but also pays significant attention to the sheer physicality of the manuscript as an ar-

tifact and to its relationship with and influence on the written text.

Organized by Lisa Indraccolo, James Weaver and Phillip Lasater (all members of the URPP Asia and Europe), the lecture series was structured as a set of six lectures that concluded in a final roundtable discussion. The lecture series brought together a selected group of both experienced researchers and junior scholars in the field of manuscript studies, focusing on three manuscript traditions (Chinese, Arabic, and Hebrew). The invited speakers, two for each research area, were asked explicitly to address and focus on one or more issues, or to try to tackle and answer a set of key questions initially raised by the organizers. These issues fell within two broad conceptual areas.

Mutual influence

The first conceptual area concerned the analysis of paleographic materials, texts and paratexts, and related critical issues in the study of physical carriers, attending particularly to the interaction between the physical manuscript and the written text. Konrad Schmid (University of Zurich) surveyed the sparse and fragmentary material remnants of Israelite and Judahite scribal activity from the Neo-Assyrian period (specifically, 9th–8th cent. B.C.E.). He discussed how a number of the writings that eventually constituted the Hebrew Bible most likely originated in this period, having begun as scribal texts that circulated as a small number of exemplars. A central characteristic of the texts as “redactional literature” is their gradually expanding commentary. Paul Nicholas Vogt (University of Heidelberg) proposed a paleographic analysis of ancient Chinese Shang (1751–1045/1122 B.C.E.) oracle bones and Zhou (1045/1122–221 B.C.E.) bronze inscriptions on ritual vessels, further

broadening his discourse in order to cover paleographic materials that employ different kinds of physical carriers (stone, bamboo, wood) and exploring the relationship and mutual influence between text, manuscript, and writing. Andreas Kaplony (LMU Munich) presented an overview of the documentary and epistolary material on papyrus preserved from the first Islamic centuries, before discussing the development of Arabic textual culture and its relationship to the state as revealed by the available papyrological and numismatic evidence.

The second conceptual area covered broader issues of textual and scribal cultures, the production and transmission of manuscript texts, the construction of shared knowledge, and the specific role of manuscripts in such a process. Michael Segal (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) summarized the varieties of ancient Jewish scribal culture from the Hellenistic period, particularly as gleaned from the Dead Sea Scrolls, which provide the earliest material evidence of the Hebrew Bible. Tracking a trajectory discernible between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the medieval Masoretic codex (MT), Segal addressed the shift in Jewish scribal culture from a combination of “interventionist” and “conservative” practices toward the more stable text production that post-dated Rome’s destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 C.E. He then outlined the methodology of the Hebrew University Bible Project and its effort to produce a diplomatic edition of the Hebrew Bible. Miriam Wagner (Woolf Institute, Cambridge) offered an analysis of scribal training and practice amongst medieval Jewish communities in Egypt and Islamic Spain based on the vast array of manuscript material from the period preserved in the Cairo Geniza. Lastly, Rens Krijgsman (University of Oxford) starting from the early Chinese bamboo manuscripts of the Tsinghua collection “The Metal Bound Coffin” (*Jin

Teng) and “Treasured Instructions” (*Bao Xun) taken as case studies, addressed issues such as the establishment of textual and meaning communities, the interrelationship between the oral and the written, the transmission and tradition of knowledge, and the construction of shared cultural memory within such communities in Early China.

The final roundtable involved two presentations: one by Michael Friedrich (University of Hamburg), who is the Director of the Center for the Study of Manuscript Cultures in Hamburg, and another by Matthias Richter (University of Colorado at Boulder). Michael Friedrich provided a detailed survey on the ongoing activities and research projects at his institution. Based on his long-time experience in the field of comparative manuscript studies, he offered useful operational definitions of a selection of fundamental concepts, starting with the most basic though the most problematic one (namely, “manuscript”), and addressed further topics such as the interplay between orality and literacy and the possibility of a functional manuscript typologization according to use. By contrast, Matthias Richter contributed a palaeographic perspective, questioning the alleged “textual fluidity” of early Chinese manuscripts on bamboo hypothesized on the basis of their “modularity.” He mounted substantial evidence against this hypothesis. From an interdisciplinary perspective, he also proposed pragmatic ways of ascertaining textual identity in manuscripts that carry several texts at a time, further addressing the issue of the relationship between the physical dimensions, format, and structure of a manuscript and the function and use of the (written) text.

Overall, the lecture series reached its goal by intensifying the academic discussion about manuscripts and hopefully made its contribution to the future organization of similar events.

Origins of Logic

Problems of logic and epistemology are not among the major topics treated in early Chinese received texts. The *Gongsunlongzi* is one of the few that deals extensively with these topics, making it somewhat peculiar in the history of Chinese thought. But what does the text actually say about issues of logic, language and epistemology? The international conference “The *Gongsunlongzi* and Other Neglected Texts: Aligning Philosophical and Philological Perspectives” (August 27–29, 2014), brought together a group of scholars from different disciplines to discuss the *Gongsunlongzi* and other frequently overlooked or understudied texts addressing similar issues.

Ivana Buljan

‘White horse is not a horse;’ ‘a solid stone and a white stone are two different things;’ ‘a chicken has three legs;’ ‘cows and sheep have five feet.’ These are just some of the most famous paradoxes in Chinese philosophy, all taken from the *Gongsunlongzi*, which is an anthology of texts usually attributed to the ancient Chinese logician Gongsun Long. Reading this text requires going through its logically sophisticated, rather convoluted, and even humorous arguments that typically support paradoxical theses.

Philological accuracy

On the basis of historical, textual and philosophical reasons, it is notoriously difficult to read, translate, and interpret the *Gongsunlongzi*. With regard to its history and textual character, some scholars have claimed that the text was forged during the Chinese Medieval period (3rd–7th C.E.), having been compiled from heterogeneous materials.

Philosophical approaches to the *Gongsunlongzi* tend to ignore important

philological questions, such as the authenticity of the text, by simply acknowledging the *Gongsunlongzi* as a Warring States text (453–221 B.C.E.). Being aware of these opposite poles, the conference—organized by Wolfgang Behr (Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies/URPP Asia and Europe), Lisa Indraccolo (URPP Asia and Europe) and Rafael Suter (Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies)—sought to contribute to a more accurate philological study that “might not only provide a clearer picture of the process of composition of the *Gongsunlongzi* and the dating of the different textual layers that compose the text, but might also provide useful information about its context and valuable clues for its interpretation.”

A special theory of reference

Bo Mou (San José State University) and Fung Yiu-ming (Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and Soochow University of Taiwan) approached the *Gongsunlongzi* from the perspective of analytic philosophy. They both stressed that the *Gongsunlongzi* argument ‘White-Horse-Not-Horse’ is based on a special theory of reference. Mou explored philosophically interesting and significant implications of the “white horse” argument, debating the issue of how reference is possible. In particular, he pointed out that the line of thought expressed in the *Gongsunlongzi* calls our attention to the double reference of names, proposing Lockean-Fregean and Milian-Kripkean approaches to the text. Fung analyzed the relationship between theory of reference and ontology in the *Gongsunlongzi*. He showed how, according to him, the *Gongsunlongzi*’s theory of reference as witnessed in the “white horse” argument is grounded in an onto-cosmol-



Mythical ancient Chinese philosopher Gongsun Long with his famous 'White Horse.'

ogy. On this basis, Fung proposed a new interpretation of five of the six chapters composing the *Gongsunlongzi*.

Issues of logic

In the next session, Thierry Lucas (Université catholique de Louvain [Louvain-la-Neuve], Belgium) and Rafał Jan Felbur (Stanford University) delved into issues of logic. Lucas examined features of the *Gongsunlongzi*'s style as it pertains to logic, looking at a list of significant words, such as *you*, *wu*, *ke*, *fei*, *bu*, *gu*, *suoyi*, etc., and tracking their occurrences. Proceeding from the idea that each author has his or her own logical style, and that individual logical styles can be measured objectively, Lucas compared similarities and differences between the *Gongsunlongzi* and a selection of other more or less contemporary texts in order to explore the issue of their origins and authorship. Felbur analyzed the logic of identity in the early medieval Buddhist treatise *Zhaolun* by Sengzhao (374/384–414). He focused on the concept of *ji*, which, according to Richard Robinson, has two main functions: (1) „namely, that is,” a

copula of complete identity between A and B; and (2) „to reach, to approach,” a transitive verb meaning for A to become B, or for A to remain B. Felbur focused in particular on the former function of *ji*, i.e. “establishing ‘identity,’” extensively examining its meaning and significance in Sengzhao's work.

Comparison of texts

Dennis Schilling (University of Munich/National Chengchi University, Taiwan) examined the last chapter of the *Gongsunlongzi*, 'Mingshilun' ('On Name and Substance'), which deals with the problem of referring to things and drawing distinctions through language. Schilling focused on the category of *wèi* ('being in a place'), which he defined as “a part of a categorical schema which exposes the basic principles for the practice/conditions of ‘right naming’ (*zheng ming*).” Actually, ‘to put something in a position/in a place’ is part of a predication that differs from its referential function. Liu Tisheng (Canton Huanan Normal University) contributed a philosophical analysis of the third chapter of the *Gongsunlongzi*,

the treatise 'Zhiwulun' ('On Pointing at Things'). Ernst-Joachim Vierheller (University of Hamburg) examined how another famous received text, the *Zhuangzi*, reads the *Gongsunlongzi*, focusing on the issue of classification and de-classification. Vierheller compared the chapters 'Zhiwulun' in the *Gongsunlongzi* and 'Qiwulun' ('On Equalizing Things') in the *Zhuangzi*. From this analysis it emerged that, though the fictive character of Gongsun Long is occasionally ridiculed in some anecdotes preserved in the *Zhuangzi*, the latter's author(s) or compiler(s) largely adopted positions held in the *Gongsunlongzi* and integrated them into their own doctrine. Zhou Changzhong (Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences) offered a philosophical interpretation of the 'Baimalun,' the 'White Horse' chapter. Ian Johnston (Tasmania, Australia) analyzed the relationship between the *Gongsunlongzi* and the dialectical chapters of the *Mozi*, studying their different ideas on language. Wang Ping (University of New South Wales, Australia) contributed an historical overview of the different interpretations of the *Gongsunlongzi*, discussing contributions of both Chinese and Western scholars to the study of the text. Jiang Xiangdong (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing) provided a new philosophical interpretation of the 'Baimalun.' Finally, the last presentation dealt with another “neglected” text, the *Yinwenzi*, Lukáš Zádřapa (Charles University, Prague) analyzed linguistic affinities in light of basic corpus data.

The conference allowed a sharing of new perspectives on the *Gongsunlongzi*, which was highly stimulating and beneficial. It both raised and clarified many important issues regarding the study of the text. A selection of the papers presented during the conference will be published in the Swiss Asia Society's series *Worlds of East Asia*.

Principles, Illusions, Names

It would seem that at least on the intuitive level, a certain concept of 'concept' must exist. After all, academic disciplines use "concepts" as the very means of research. However, it is obvious that different properties and definitions of concepts are operative across the various academic disciplines, prompting the suggestion that there are in fact different concepts of 'concept' at play. Is a generalized understanding of 'concept', one which would unite different concepts of 'concept' across the disciplinary boundaries, possible?

Polina Lukicheva

This was the leading theme of the workshop "Concepts of Concept: Perspectives across Languages, Cultures and Discipline" (September 10–11, 2014) organized by the Comparative Conceptual Research Group at the URPP Asia and Europe. In a way, it tackled one of the most challenging topics in philosophy, for an understanding of concepts is inevitably bound up with a comprehension of how humans confront the external world and make sense of it. The workshop sought to bring together current research on theories of concepts in analytic philosophy, cognitive psychology, linguistics, and intellectual history, approaching the problem of concepts in four ways: (1) through inquiring into the ontology of concepts using the toolkits of analytic philosophy and the evidential data of cognitive psychology; (2) by looking at types of concepts and modes of conceptualizing in non-European cultures; (3) by examining the relations between lexical units and concepts; (4), by looking at the historicity of concepts.

Tools, rules and principles

In his opening remarks to the workshop, Ralph Weber (URPP Asia and

Europe, now University of Basel) drew attention to the dilemmas arising within different concepts of 'concept', notably between textual and non-textual approaches to concepts. Hans-Johann Glock (University of Zurich) discussed ordinary uses of 'concept' from the viewpoint of their logical appropriateness. Some types of concepts, called *predicative*, correspond to a certain class of objects in the logical structure of the world, which can be expressed by general terms. However the predicative understanding of concepts does not cover non-verbalized cognitive phenomena. Such concepts are addressed by the theory of *mental representations* developed by Jerry Fodor. He assumes that concepts are psychological entities embedded in the internal structure of mental processes like general terms in language. In his talk Glock challenged this point of view: by referring to Charles Peirce's theory of the sign, he demonstrated that concepts cannot be explained in terms of a merely representational paradigm. Analytic philosophy gives a different concept of 'concept': it defines them not as entities (whether outside or within the mind) but as certain cognitive *abilities*. Glock suggested that it is more correct to look at concepts as *tools, rules* and *principles* of cognitive operations such as classification and inference.

While postulating logical rationality of cognitive processes with explicit reference to Kant is commonly accepted by analytic philosophy, evidence from psychological experiments featured in the next two presentations of the workshop introduced substantial scepticism in this respect. In her talk, Asifa Majid (Radboud University Nijmegen) presented data from psychological experiments

showing that categorizing objects is generally based on comparison of a given object to so-called *prototypes* (Eleanor Rosch). Using the example of designations for colors in different cultures and a notable example of Malaysean people having abstract categories for smell, Majid demonstrated irregularities in mapping mental categorical structures onto lexical sets. Both language structures as well as mental operations reveal functional principles that are far less definable than that of *a priori* domains.

Kees Versteegh (Emeritus Radboud University Nijmegen) countered Chomskian views on mind and language by referring to the now routinely criticized behaviorist theory of Burrhus F. Skinner. According to this theory, nothing in the human behavior, including even such complex and seemingly creative mental activities as verbal behavior, goes beyond the mechanics of processing environmental inputs in a variety of ways in the brain, leading to reflex-like reactions. The functional effectiveness of previous reactions defines recurrent patterns of the behavior and defines the learning process. Not only is there no need for presupposing intelligence for these processes, there is also literally no place to ground *a priori* "reason" in the mind, independently of the "material back and forth" of neural chain reactions, as experiments on the physiology of memory by Eric Kandel have shown.

The places of concepts

The second part of the workshop focused on the perspectives on concepts and conceptualizing in non-European cultures. In his talk, Christoph Harbsmeier (University of Oslo) showed that no terminologized notion for 'concept' seems to have existed in Chinese before the loanword *gainian* 概念, which approximates the western notion of "concept," was introduced via Japanese as late as the early

20th century. Harbsmeier defines a concept by looking at the variety of its features revealed in *lexical fields*. In the presentation, he outlined a concept of individuality in Chinese culture as his main example, by looking at various kinds of first person pronouns in early Chinese sources. Harbsmeier observed that in the variety of ego-designations, individuality is often represented in a certain role (social, literary, etc.) and its properties are situation-dependent. Generally, it seems that the variety of names for phenomenal appearances displayed by Chinese texts, often make it a hard task for a researcher to identify an integrated essence of a concept. Patrick McAllister (Heidelberg University) showed that from the viewpoint of Buddhist theorists of language “the grasping of the same nature amongst things” is seen as an erroneous way of conceptualizing. According to them, true cognition should be able to differentiate effects. It does not mix identities of things judged by seemingly identical effects. Thus, the only valid mode of conceptual cognition is inference based on the *exclusion* of sameness.

It could seem to some that the Deleuzian intuition of grasping things in their “internal difference” comes close to this point. Bruce B. Janz (University of Central Florida) applied Deleuze and Guattari’s views on producing concepts to the study of African philosophy. Janz maintained that “concepts have places,” that is concepts are territorially bound and derive their properties from specific cultural contexts.

Inadequate notions of wordhood

The third part of the workshop was devoted to analyze more precisely where concepts reside in language and how words or other grammatical morphemes relate to concepts. In his presentation, Wolfgang Behr (University of Zurich) first pointed out that

many statements about concept-word-relationships made in analytical philosophy and cognitive psychology, no matter how critical they are regarding this relation, are based on the assumption that ‘word’ is a stable and clearly definable unit. From a linguist’s perspective, problems of mapping concepts to words evolve precisely from the inadequacy, even meaninglessness, of notions of wordhood. Using examples from early Chinese sources, Behr demonstrated that Chinese philosophers made clear distinctions between “word-like” lexical units (*ming, yu, yan, hao, ci*) and “ideas” or “meanings” (*yi*). While maintaining that the former convey meaning in a certain way, they often argued that language is not capable of fully capturing the subject-matter that lies beyond lexical expression, different views on referential relation between lexical expression and reality notwithstanding. The view that concepts are irreducible to language also opens ways for reasoning on other ways of expressing meaning and ideas (e.g. visual).

The presentation by Iwona Kraska-Szlenk (University of Warsaw) approached concepts through functions and semantics of grammatical particles. Her case study drew upon Swahili, the most important Bantu language used in Southeast Africa, where words marked by a suffix *-ni* form locative classes of nouns by which certain relations between a person and a landscape are indicated. The presentation by Erich Poppe (University of Marburg) demonstrated how medieval Irish scholars, based upon a system of judgments (e.g. “specific,” “proper,” etc.), created an order of correlations between categories of things in the world and masculine, feminine, and neuter genders of nouns. Whereas this medieval example shows a compromising solution with respect to the accommodation of arbitrariness of grammatical struc-

tures to the knowledge of objects in the world, the relation between language, concepts and extralinguistic referents certainly remains a complex issue from the point of view of modern linguistics.

Cultural practices of naming

When recent history of research on concepts is observed, another paradox about concepts appears. On the one hand, the usefulness and power of concepts are obvious, as concepts circulate in cultural contexts, motivate and frame scholarly practices. In her talk, Sinai Rusinek (The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute) gave an overview of several national and international projects in conceptual history (*Begriffsgeschichte*), where concepts operate as an efficient means to mould notions of historical processes and cultural development. Henning Trüper (EHESS, Paris), on the other hand, demonstrated the gradual “deflation” of concept even in such “concept-sustaining” disciplines as analytic philosophy and historical semantics. With references to Usener, Cassirer, Kripke, and Levi-Strauss, Trüper suggested that concepts can still be meaningfully defined in terms of cultural practices of *naming*: a name-concept is generated by a perceptual act of attention to a particular phenomenon, as a fixation of a “moment of emphatic phenomenal experience,” at the same time being bounded to cultural and linguistic practices peculiar to this particular historical setting, whereby the concept of concept eventually becomes subject to historical change itself.

The observation that concepts are amenable to changes suggests that general properties of concepts can be productively sought in the variety of actual transformations that concepts undergo across cultures and disciplines. Thus “Concepts in Transition” is going to be the topic of the next workshop of the Comparative Conceptual Research Group.

Deconstructing Hierarchies

Led by Suad Joseph (University of California, Davis), the enlightening workshop “Gendering Citizenship” (September 10, 2014) focused on the Middle East and beyond. The event was organized by the Institute for Asian and Oriental Studies – Gender Studies, the Swiss Society for Gender Studies (SGGF/SSEG), and the URPP Asia and Europe.

Deniz Yüksel

As one of the pioneers in Middle Eastern women’s and gender studies, Suad Joseph, professor of anthropology and women’s studies at the University of California, Davis, was invited to carry out a workshop at the URPP Asia and Europe and the Department of Gender Studies, Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies.

The aim of this interdisciplinary event was to bring together students and scholars from diverse disciplines such as political science, history, anthropology, Middle Eastern, and gender studies. The common ground between the projects, which involved current doctoral and postdoctoral work, was the concept of gendered citizenship as treated from diverse angles.

“Civic myths”

Divided into two parts, the workshop began with a keynote lecture by Suad Joseph, after which other participants presented and discussed their research projects. Joseph’s dense lecture pursued the central notions of the project abstracts that had been submitted by participants prior to the workshop. She thus gave an enriching overview of the theoretical and methodological dimensions of the concept of citizenship, emphasizing the idea that gender is a crucial category of the concept, despite it commonly being regarded as gender-neutral. After

pointing out that citizenship is a central yet contested concept used to analyze the relationship between state and society, she insisted on the fact that analyzing citizenship is mostly about analyzing discourses and narratives, about analyzing juridical and social practices. While she emphasized the masculinization of citizenship throughout the regions of the Middle East, notions of rights also play an increasing role in terms of

Even though society itself undergoes constant changes, it is organized around fixed social hierarchies such as gender and age.

gender equity and equality. Moreover, Joseph made clear that gender is a central category that creates hierarchies and normalizations within citizenship, producing inclusions and exclusions as they relate to people’s belonging in a certain community as well as to power relations. Relatedly, she referred to the concept of “civic myths” that tell us “who we are” and “what we are.” She argues that a central civic myth in the Middle East is what she calls the “kin contract,” “a complex and paradoxical deployment of a care/control paradigm of extended kinship to achieve order” and to organize reproduction. Citing her study of Lebanese citizenship, she pointed out that this “civic myth inscribed a legal fiction of a kinship system based on imagined homogenous kinship groups.”¹ According to her, even though society itself undergoes

constant changes, it is organized around fixed social hierarchies such as gender and age. She made clear that such hidden hierarchies and normalizations can be deconstructed through gender and are to be deconstructed in further analyses.

Efficient coaching

The second and main part of the workshop started with the task for every participant to reflect on his/her own project’s “point of departure,” the core theme or question so to speak. According to Joseph, one has to look for it “not in the question but in the answer or the hypothesis” of the research project. It was evident that Suad Joseph has rich expertise in coaching scholars efficiently. She devoted time to each project, going through it with the participant, discussing its main contours, and finding the point of departure of almost every project through applying a technique based on reducing of the project’s theme to a simple formula. The technique inspired the attending students and scholars alike, who eventually named it the “Suad Joseph Game.”

An enriching experience

These doctoral and postdoctoral research projects were quite diverse. They covered a spectrum of regional and thematic research that included a project on squatters (and hence, potentially new citizens) living at the legal margins in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan). There was also a project on Islam, pluralism, and gender within the Tunisian political party *Harakat an-Nahda*, as well as a study of the masculinity of court eunuchs in the Near East.

The workshop shed new light on the applicability of the concept of citizenship. To work with and learn from a scholar like Joseph was truly an enriching experience for those in attendance.

¹ Suad Joseph, “Civic myths, Citizenship, and Gender in Lebanon,” In: Suad Joseph (ed.), *Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East*, Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2000, p. 136.

Social Movements from Different Angles

The workshop “Social Movements in Theory and Practice: Concepts and Experiences from Different Regional Contexts” (October 24–25, 2014) organized by the URPP Asia and Europe and the Centre for African Studies (University of Basel) brought together different perspectives on social movements stemming from case studies in different regions of the world.

Silva Lieberherr

After Hanspeter Kriesi (European University Institute, Florence) gave an introduction to the field of social movement theories, the other invited guests presented case studies from Cambodia (AbdouMaliq Simone), Mali (Hamidou Magassa), Japan (Koichi Hasegawa), and Egypt (Marie Duboc). Younger scholars later analyzed case studies from Guinea, Uganda, India, South Africa, Taiwan, and Japan.

The case studies were rich in detail as well as full of contradictions and particularities. They challenged not only the conceptions of what social movements are, but also the dichotomies and assumptions often applied when talking about them. In this article, I will address the workshop's diverse material, discussing the various issues and questions that emerged.

“Polite protests”

The case studies from Egypt, Japan and Taiwan raised the questions of the degree to which protests or social movements must be contentious in order to be conceptualized as “protests,” and under what circumstances protesters choose these non-contentious forms of protest. Marie Duboc (University of Tübingen) analysed labour movements in Egypt and labelled them as forms of “polite protests.” First, these protests were non-con-

frontational. Second, they were non-contentious in their major orientation and focused on bread-and-butter demands. In doing so, the movement that Duboc presented explicitly restricted itself to economic demands and tried to avoid more political ones, though of course this distinction is constructed, as we will see later. These movements fought for entitlements or rights rather than political change and framed their protest as rightful resistance within the existing political system. Consequently, when trying to get these entitlements, the actors cooperated with institutions of the state instead of contesting them fundamentally.

Towards advocacy

For Japan, Koichi Hasegawa (Tohoku University, Sendai) described this as cooperation rather than confrontation with state institutions when describing the environmental movement. The movement focuses on educational activities that are intended to change consumer behaviour, cooperating for this purpose with the ministry of environment, particularly on a local level. Hasegawa showed that the movement indeed sought change but was nonetheless non-contentious. Ayaka Löschke (URPP Asia and Europe) compared the anti-nuclear movement after Chernobyl with the one after Fukushima. She showed a similar tendency, namely that the anti-nuclear movements in Japan changed their repertoire from agitations to advocacy. In doing so, it has also become more “polite,” to re-use the term introduced by Duboc. Simona Alba Grano (University of Zurich) argued that, during the so-called “tree-hugging” movement in Taiwan, activists framed their protests non-contentiously, insisting mainly on tree pro-

tection and heritage conservation while in fact criticizing both the decisions of the political establishment and the lack of opportunities for participation. These examples lead to a new series of questions: What kind of arrangement is needed for contentious social movements to be conceptualized as such? Under which circumstances do protesters choose “polite” forms of protest?

Fighting against whom?

“Polite” forms of protest blur the line between politics and economics in many areas, three of which were important during the workshop. The first area concerns the question of to whom

The most powerful contemporary movements are or have become political parties, such as the right-wing party movement in Europe, the party-turned Indignados, or the “tree hugging” movement in Taiwan.

the movements direct their demands. Kriesi noted that whereas classical social movements (i.e. the labour movements) formerly considered capitalism and its representatives as their main enemies with the state only later becoming the primary target, today's movements seem once again to contest economic actors rather than state institutions. The discussion showed that this issue has gained importance in the context of supra-national structures of governance both in and beyond Europe. These institutions decide on peoples' lives but are neither democratically legitimate nor accessible nor accountable. Some participants argued that it has therefore become increas-

ingly difficult for social movements to know whom to address with their demands. However, others argued that the nation state is the primary target, since states are in the position to meet the movements' demands. Also in supranational negotiations, movement protests can count on the national governments' bargaining power and therefore leverage the movements' demands.

Leaders in protest

The second area concerns the organization of the movements. The environmental movement in Japan served as an example. Hasegawa analysed how local movement groups increasingly act like small companies by producing wind energy and selling sun collectors. This makes the distinction between social movements and economic companies difficult. The same applies to the distinction between social movements and political parties. Kriesi noted that many of the most powerful contemporary movements are or have become political parties, such as the right-wing party movement in Europe, the party-turned Indignados, or the "tree hugging" movement in Taiwan.

The third area concerns the activists themselves. The lines between politics and economics become even blurrier when politics becomes the activists' source of income. The case study from Uganda and Guinea illustrated this point. Joschka Philipps (Centre for African Studies) gave an example of movements' leaders being, in his words, "extremely situational." This implies that these figures are political leaders who make *ad hoc* decisions that depend on multiple factors, such as which upper-level leaders they support. Accordingly, their main task is to mobilize people through the general frustration of the upper-level leaders. Along similar lines yet with a different argument, Silva Lieberherr (University of Zurich) described activ-

ists in small movements in India. They constantly struggle to maintain the balancing act in order to stay trustworthy: On the one hand, activists need to be good at fixing alleged problems, so that they must be close to the powerful and part of electoral politics. On the other hand, maintaining honesty by staying out of politics and being morally upright is their major advantage against the established political parties and their main mobilizing argument.

The ambivalent role and position of elites was further illustrated by Hamidou Magassa's (SERNES / University of Bamako) presentation on the link between the democracy movement and the education system in Mali. He described how discussions of democracy and its meaning were quite present in the streets of Bamako, but that democracy should be understood as an opportunity for people to change their circumstances of living. Magassa argued that it is the task of the elite in education to invoke creativity in people for the sake of imagining and realizing opportunities for change. He suggested that, through education, elites played a central role in making democracy meaningful to people, but that, in so doing, the same elites tended to overlook the role that local knowledge could play in this endeavor.

Space for manoeuvre

Presenting the actions of the Pama-group in Phnom Penh, Abdou Maliq Simone (Goldsmiths, University of London) reflected on the question: To whom do social movements address their claims? He argued that earlier urban movements turned to the government and explicitly claimed a space in the city so that, among other reasons, they would have a place to be addressed when the government reacted to their demands. In contrast, the Pama-group is constantly on the move and the activists remain anonymous. This group proved to be a very

particular kind of movement—an informal network that did not address the public directly, but opened up a space for manoeuvre and political action. The group targeted the elite by disclosing compromising information about them or their activities. Simone described how the activists worked clandestinely and individually, not engaging simultaneously in the same protest activities. But they still operated in cooperation.

The silences of protest

This posed the question of how much collectivity is needed for an informal network to be designated a social movement. The same question arose when talking about consumer boycotts in the context of Japan. Julia Obinger (University of Zurich) proposed that one should study the nature and relative weakness of these boycotts as a form of social protest. Bobby Luthra Sinha (Centre for African Studies) offered a similar but slightly different perspective with examples from India and South Africa. She described two small but very active movements: a nature conservation movement in Rajasthan and the Anti-drug movement in Durban. These micro-movements showed how the non-visible actions of micro-movements may still be regarded as vibrant "inner discursive spheres" that need to be observed in order to understand the nature of these mobilisations.

To conclude, many of the workshop's case studies called into question dichotomies that are commonly applied in the field: contentious – non-contentious; political – economic; collective – individual. Even if most of the presentations explored the margins of the classical social movement theories (such as resource mobilization or the political process model) and found them too rigid, those theories still provided many interesting approaches for the study of very different cases of protest.

Increasing Participation

The lecture series „Current Political Affairs and Civil Society in Japan,“ organized by the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies and the URPP Asia and Europe, took place on four evenings in October and November of 2014. The aim of this event was to take an in-depth look at Japan’s current political affairs, with particular emphasis on the perspective of changes and continuities of Japanese civil society.

Julia Obinger

Koichi Hasegawa (Tohoku University) spoke on the connection between Japan’s civil society and the Fukushima nuclear accident. He argued that this accident raised important questions concerning Japan’s civil society: What role did civil society play prior to the accident, how did it react to the accident, and what impact has it had on Japan’s nuclear policies following the accident? Under the assumption of a relative weakness of civil society, Hasegawa focused on societal, organizational, and local community-level activities. He explored his questions by analyzing documents and news clippings pertinent to the accident, participant observations of protest activities, and a comparative analysis of Japan’s nuclear policies with Germany’s policy shift towards a nuclear power phase-out. Hasegawa argued that, after the accident, energetic citizen protests became frequent and the structures around which protests and public demonstrations were organized strengthened substantially over time. He concluded that civil society has begun to influence public policy, and is fostering a deeper public discourse, while advancing policy proposals especially in the area of energy policy.

Jeffrey Broadbent (University of Minnesota) presented his insights into the power relationships between the Japanese state ministries and civil soci-

ety. His thesis is that these ministries (bureaucracies) enjoy considerable autonomy from control by the Parliament (Diet) and the Prime Ministerial Cabinet: the national structure of power at its core consists of a shifting power game among three main actors, the Ministries, the corporate-organized business sector, and the political coalition in control of the Lower House. The specific pattern since 1955 has been the Economic Ministry (MITI, since 2001 METI), the most important business association (Keidanren), and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Since the 1990s, the opposition Democratic Party (Minshuto) has gained occasional political power, but even then, while co-operating with the Environmental Ministry, has faced intransigent opposition from METI and Keidanren. Even though the number of associations in civil society has mushroomed, since the so-called NGO law (established in 1998) readily provides the status of nonprofit corporation to them, the conservative ministries, in conjunction with the LDP and Keidanren, have worked to corral and control this burgeoning herd of local associations. Broadbent argued in his presentation that one of the most effective methods of control, very much continuing to the present day, is for ministries to give local associations funding, but in return to place a retired bureaucrat on their Board of Directors in order to shape the stances and policies of the association. In its latest instance, this method of social control has very much reduced in size, duration and institutionalization the ground swell of protest against the resumption of nuclear power.

A more realistic look

Ellis Krauss (University of California in San Diego) took a closer look at Japan’s current political leader, Prime

Minister Abe Shinzō. The latter has been called an “Asian Hitler” by the Chinese, while his rightwing domestic supporters see him as the first leader to finally give a “true” accounting about Japan’s actions in the Pacific War and to make Japan into a “normal” nation militarily. Krauss argued that the assessment from each side is exaggerated yet Abe’s foreign policy is something of an enigma, evading straight answers to its major difficult issues, e.g. Japan’s dangerous conflicts with its Asian neighbors. He pleaded for a more realistic look at the rational and irrational dimensions of Japan’s current foreign policy from the perspective of Japan’s own national interests.

To conclude the series, Robert Pekkanen (University of Washington in Seattle) spoke on neighborhood associations and local governance in Japan. With 300 000 local branches, neighborhood associations (NHAs) are Japan’s most numerous civil society organizations. NHAs also contribute in complex ways to local governance. His talk provided a multifaceted empirical portrait of Japan’s neighborhood associations by drawing on an extensive body of empirical data derived from the first national survey of NHAs carried out in 2007. Pekkanen examined how local associational structures affected the quality of local governance, and thus the quality of life for Japan’s citizens and residents. His study of NHAs also illuminated the way in which these ambiguous associations can help refine civil society theory and contribute to social service provision, cooperation with local governments, and political participation among others.

The lecture series provided a unique opportunity to get first-hand insights into contemporary Japanese civil society and current political affairs from leading experts in their fields. It is clear that these issues will remain high up on the agenda of international Japanese studies.

Manifold Understandings

The term 'translation' is itself subject to constant discussions and revisions within many disciplines. At the same time, it also plays a vital and crucial role within the research that is undertaken at the URPP Asia and Europe. Against this background, the annual conference of the URPP, "Asia and Europe in Translation: Interdisciplinary Perspectives" (November 6–8, 2014), allowed participants to approach the different notions of translation within the framework of the entangled histories of Asia and Europe from an interdisciplinary and broad historical perspective.

Christoph Mittmann

The aim of the conference was to bring both differences and similarities of 'translation' into a fruitful dialogue. The theoretical starting point was to focus on specific contexts of translation as well as on the many questions about the terminology itself: Do we speak of translation literally or rather metaphorically? And what consequences do our answers have for the respective studies?

After the opening remarks of Katharina Maag Merki (Vice Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Zurich) and Hans Bjarne Thomsen (University of Zurich), Wolfgang Behr (University of Zurich) opened the first panel, which was entitled "Discourses and Traditions of Translation." Its focus was on discursive frameworks of translation within, across and beyond languages and cultures in Europe and East Asia. Bruno Rochette (Université de Liège) compared the different terminologies of 'translation' in Greek and Latin. Since Greece was a linguistically closed domain, translations found rather low interest and were produced mainly for utilitarian aims. This situation only changed with the beginning of Bible

translations. In the Roman world, on the contrary, translations played a vital role in the functioning of the empire and also included the translations of speech between men and gods. Cicero's theoretical issues on translation are the first known examinations of this subject. Marion Eggert's (Ruhr-University Bochum) talk was dedicated to the translation of poetry in Korea during the Chosŏn-period. Korean scholars faced the challenge of translating Chinese regulated verse not only into their own language, but also adapting them to the poetic form common in Korea at the time. Considering this high adaptation effort, Eggert questioned the suitability of the term *translation* and suggested substituting another term for it, such as *trans-fer* or *transmission*. This theoretical notion was also addressed by Judy Wakabayashi (Kent State University), who analyzed the discussion of the import and adaption of Western translation-theories in Japan. Some of the intellectuals who engaged with this question advocated a wholesale adoption, while others favored a more selective approach, reflecting the Western theories in a critical way. However, these critical reflections have so far not found a way back into the Western discourse. According to Wakabayashi, this trend of excluding other voices is in a way characteristic of Western academia in general.

The second part of this panel revolved around Roman Jakobson's theories on translation. In his talk, Tomáš Glanc (Humboldt University Berlin) highlighted the tension between Jakobson's idea of the universality of natural languages as sign-systems and his skepticism towards the translatability of Slavic literature, which he considered as part of an autochthonous, "organic" Slavic culture.

Jakobson's concept of 'transmutation'—i.e. the interpretation of verbal signs through the signs of nonverbal sign systems—was then taken up by Ralf Müller (University of Zurich), who offered an alternative to the term 'translation' and elaborated on the theoretical background in order to extend the discussion beyond the narrow confines of linguistics. Finally, Mark Gamsa (Tel Aviv University) concluded the panel with his comments on Jakobson.

Translating practical knowledge

Ulrich Rudolph and Sven Trakulhun (both University of Zurich) opened the second panel, which was entitled "Knowledge Transfers." Hyunhee Park (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York) presented the translation processes of geographical knowledge between the Chinese and the Muslim worlds. Translations from Indian languages into Persian were the focus of the talk by Eva Orthmann (University of Bonn). These translations of texts belonging to non-Muslim, Indian scholarly traditions made them accessible to Persian-speaking Muslims and initiated the production of texts on non-Muslim, Indian traditions directly written in Persian, both by Muslim and non-Muslim authors. The difficulties of translating practical knowledge into written text was the next issue, which Dagmar Schäfer (Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin) addressed in her talk on attempts to institutionalize certain manufacturing practices during the Qing dynasty. Schäfer demonstrated how, by being documented in writing, the practices themselves changed. The presentation by Mareile Flitsch (University of Zurich) and Nathalie Marseglia (University of Zurich) approached 'translation' by revealing some problematic sides of the textual representation of practical knowledge during the process of "heritagiza-

tion." Drawing on the concept of "contact zones," their talk was aimed at grasping the multiple processes of translation and interpretation by the various actors involved in producing texts on craft knowledge, thereby shaping discourses about skilled practice.

Translation and transformation

The third panel was called "Buddhist Texts and Concepts Across Asia," which Raji C. Steineck (University of Zurich) introduced. Two translation processes were examined by Ingo Strauch (Université de Lausanne) in his presentation on the Gandhāran Buddhist texts, which belong to the oldest scriptures of Buddhism. First, he noted the shift of transmission techniques from orality to script, since orally transmitted texts were being committed to writing for the first time. And secondly, he pointed to a language-shift from the so-called "Middle Gangetic" language of the oral tradition to a Middle Indian language used for the written versions. Stefano Zacchetti (University of Oxford) looked at early Chinese commentaries on translated Indian Buddhist texts. The focus of his talk was on interlinear commentaries written during the Three Kingdoms period, which show how these texts were understood during the initial phase of Buddhist presence in China. In the case of the *Blue Cliff Record*, a collection of Chán Buddhist kōans first published in 1128 C.E., it is not a question of translation but rather one of hermeneutics, as Steven Heine (Florida International University) stated in his presentation, when the attempt is made to date its importation to Japan correctly since the original sources remain unknown. For Jörg Plassen (Ruhr University Bochum), a translated term is only the first step in the process of including it into the target language. While referring to the idea of 'conceptual blending,' he argued that the traditional meaning of a

term used for translating a new concept in the target language may interact with its actual usage for a long time.

The fourth panel "Media Translations" was chaired by Andrea Riemschnitter (University of Zurich) and was opened by Brett de Bary (Cornell University), who raised the question of how to 'translate' translation. She defined it as a process that will never produce the same rather than an endpoint. Elaborating on this idea from the perspective of translation theory and post-colonial theory, she turned to the Japanese film *Death by Hanging* (1968) by director Nagisa Oshima. Rainer Maria Rilke's idea of transformation was the core of the talk by Pheng Cheah's (University of California, Berkeley). He analysed the transformative use of Rilke's *Duino Elegies* in Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Hungry Tide* to revive the traditional world of the Sundarban islands, which is now a protected mangrove forest area in Bengal and threatened with destruction by global funds invested for environmental preservation and by the activities of Northern environmental movements. The term '*jianghu*,' literally meaning 'rivers and lakes,' has many different connotations in Chinese literature, cinema and culture, standing for anarchic worlds beyond the reach of government, such the fantastical world of Chinese martial arts. The shift of connotation observable by each transmission of the term into another setting was the central theme of Helena Wu's (University of Zurich) presentation. Sarah Fraser (Heidelberg University) concluded this panel with her study of photography in China, especially stressing the unintentional consequences of knowledge transfer in the fields of anthropology and ethnography when European-trained scholars adapted European models of photographic bodily representation.

Foreign influences beyond 'reception'

The fifth and final panel chaired by Hans B. Thomsen (University of Zu-

rich) was "Visual Translations." Jeanne Egloff (University of Zurich) approached the topic from the perspective of Japanese sculpture and how entanglements with the West influenced both terminology and the art itself. Vera Wolff (ETH Zurich / IFK Wien) introduced a different notion of translation, namely the translation between line (signifying ideas) and color (signifying materiality) in the *oeuvre* of some European and Japanese artists and how they influenced each other. Taking style and iconography of Buddhist temple-paintings in India and Japan as an example, Dinah Zank (University of Zurich) addressed the issue of an appropriate term for foreign influences on art works. In the context of art history, the word 'reception' is widely used, supposing a rather passive role of the artist in adopting foreign themes or techniques. By calling this process 'translation' instead, a more active role is attributed to the artist. The conference was concluded by Paola von Wyss-Giacosa (University of Zurich) and her research on kris, the characteristic Javanese daggers, that were brought from Java to Europe and then reproduced in illustrated books. Finally, not the daggers themselves but the books were circulated and discussed, so that the daggers constantly received new interpretations not on the basis of the originals, but on the basis of visual translations into woodcuts or engravings.

Having represented a variety of approaches to concepts of translation, the conference provided a good opportunity for the participants to engage in lively discussions. While it became clear that it is worthwhile to pursue a proper definition both for the term and the various concepts of translation, it turned out to be even more important to adopt such definitions on a case by case basis, since all analyses cover a different setting which has to be considered instead of just following one textbook definition or another.

Preludes to an Exhibition

In the exhibition “Tokens of the Path – Japanese Devotional and Pilgrimage Images: The Wilfried Spinner Collection (1854–1918),” (November 28, 2014 until May 17, 2015), the University of Zurich’s Ethnographic Museum presents Japanese religious paintings and prints that were collected by the Swiss theologian and pastor Wilfried Spinner, who worked as a missionary in Japan from 1885 to 1891. This collection is accessible to the public for the first time. In what follows, the curator of the Asia collections Martina Wernsdörfer provides insight into the story behind the exhibition.

Martina Wernsdörfer

The Ethnographic Museum’s exhibit “Tokens of the Path” has a lengthy

backstory related to Wilfried Spinner’s family connections to Zurich; a growing interest in Japanese-Buddhist objects in European museums; and the liberal currents in 19th century Christian theology.

Born in 1854 in Bonstetten near Zurich, Wilfried Spinner studied theology at the University of Zurich and came into contact with liberal theological circles and, specifically, the pastor Ernst Buss. These groups pursued a version of Christianity free of dogma and open toward other religions, though not to the exclusion of missionary work. Having co-founded the General Evangelical-Protestant Missionary Society in Weimar in 1884 with Buss and others, Spinner traveled to Japan in 1885 as the

first missionary commissioned by the organization. He was simultaneously a pastor with duties abroad, operating in service of the Grand Duke of Saxony-Weimar-Eisenach and working with German-speaking congregations in Tokyo and Yokohama.

In Japan, he made use of local contacts in order to gain familiarity with religious ideas, deities, and customs. Over the years, he acquired some one hundred cultic and pilgrimage images—paintings and printed amulets (Jap. *ofuda*)—that he used for religious-historical studies. He had the contents explained and left behind written notes on some images. The notes consist mainly of transliterated Japanese terms, accompanied at times by brief explanations in German. In April of 1891, Spinner returned to Europe with his collection. From Switzerland he soon moved to Germany and was eventually promoted to the level of General Superintendent of the Saxony Grand Ducal church council. He died in Weimar in 1918.

Religious actions and forms of belief

Because of Spinner’s family ties to Zurich, his collection finally found the way to the Ethnographic Museum. While in Switzerland he was married to Bertha Stoll, whose brother was Otto Stoll, a professor of geography and ethnography at the University of Zurich. From 1889 to 1898, he was also the director of the ethnographic collection (today, the Ethnographic Museum). Otto’s youngest daughter Eva Stoll worked from 1962 to 1975 as the museum’s Asia curator and, after retiring, she established contact between Spinner’s relatives and the Ethnographic Museum, which in 1985 received eighty image-scrolls from Spinner’s collection. This donation of the images turned what were formerly objects of personal study into objects of academic research in a museum environment.

When Hosei University and the University of Zurich’s Japanology de-



Paper amulets issued by the temples situated along the Kannon pilgrimage route in the Western provinces.

partment in 2010 asked the Ethnographic Museum to join them in an international research project on Japanese-Buddhist objects in European collections, it was a chance to engage the image-scrolls anew. With the support of numerous specialists from Japan, it has been possible over the past three years to understand central elements of “the Wilfried Spinner collection,” as well as aspects of its historical context. The eighty image-scrolls proved to be key in approaching a variety of religious actions and forms of belief. They offer a strongly panoramic profile of Japan’s religious landscape in the Edo period and Meiji era. A fitting occasion to display the images arose in 2014 with the 150th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Switzerland, an event that provided an opportunity to present in both the exhibition and in publication the research results of Tomoe Irene Maria Steineck and Martina Wernsdörfer, respectively, the guest curator and the curator of the Ethnographic Museum’s Asia collections.

Junior Scholars

With the last Fall semester, several postdocs took up their research at the URPP Asia and Europe:

Dr. Rivka Eisner (performance studies)
Performance Avant-Gardes: Memory, Cultures, Contemporary Arts, and Social Change in Vietnam and South-east Asia

Dr. Elisa Ganser (Indian studies)
The Place of Art in Indian Religious Thought: On the Soteriological Value of Acting, Singing and Dancing in Abhinavagupta’s Work and Beyond

Dr. Melek Saral (political science)
Discourses and Practices of Human Rights in the Arab Spring Countries: Islamisation or Westernization of Human Rights?

Research on Modernity in Asia

On 31 August, 2015, Professor Sven Trakulhun left the University of Zurich after serving with distinction for six years as an assistant professor in the fields of Asian history and European-Asian relations, where he conducted research and taught effectively by introducing students to new subjects and perspectives.

Jörg Fisch

Sven Trakulhun arrived in Zurich well prepared for these tasks. After completing his doctorate at Giessen in 2000, where he wrote a thesis (published in 2006) on Siam and Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, he was granted several scholarships, fellowships, and research positions at Potsdam, Galway (Ireland), and Konstanz, concentrating on European-Asian relations. His research at these institutions culminated in his Konstanz *Habilitation* of 2011, “Asiatic Revolutions: Europe and the Rise and Fall of Asian Empires, 1644–1818,” which will soon be published. While in Zurich, he also published several articles on a wide range of Asian-European, Southeast and South Asian history.

Stimulating research

Equipped with this academic background, Trakulhun was destined for the position as an assistant professor at the URPP Asia and Europe. He soon became one of the supporting pillars of the research network and his work as one of the coordinators of the URPP’s Research Field 2, “Entangled Histories” was highly regarded. He stimulated research both in his research field and in cooperation with institutions in other countries, particularly by organizing a number of international workshops and conferences that addressed topics such as the transnational history

of ideas, the history of the Enlightenment in Europe and Asia, and with problems of biography: „Transcultural Bodies – Transboundary Biographies: Border Crossings in Asia and Europe“ (2010) and „Biography Afield in Asia and Europe“ (2012) to name just two of them.

Encounter between East and West

An important part of Trakulhun’s job involved his duties in the Department of History of the University of Zurich’s Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. In this capacity, he contributed to a broad range of work, especially through his teaching on multiple academic levels that included the university program Master of Advanced Studies in Applied History. Additionally, he held public lectures for a general audience. He also supervised several masters and doctoral theses. In these activities, he demonstrated his giftedness as an academic teacher and his versatility in numerous historical subjects. His main interest was always the encounter between East and West, and he showed a keen interest in subjects long neglected, such as Asia’s contribution to “modernity.” His own cultural background aided him in this line of study, the ripest fruit of which, at this point, is his *Habilitation*, which is a sophisticated investigation into the history of a difficult concept. He painstakingly shows how Europe appropriated a central feature of modernity without succeeding to monopolize it fully.

The University of Zurich, most especially the URPP and the Department of History, has good reason to be grateful to Sven Trakulhun for confronting them with an expansive, intriguing, and always fascinating field of history. We all wish him inspiration, joy and success.

On to New Shores

Ralph Weber, senior researcher and lecturer at the URPP Asia and Europe since 2008, was appointed to assistant professor at the University of Basel's Institute for European Global Studies (Europainstitut) in the Fall semester of 2014.

Wolfgang Behr

It was with mixed feelings that we learned that Ralph Weber would move to an assistant professorship at the University of Basel's Europainstitut in the Fall semester of 2014. While we happily congratulate him on this well-deserved step in his academic career, we must also acknowledge the void he has left in our research program, which he greatly supported over the last six years. Coordinating the research activities of five participating professors, several postdocs, doctoral students, and associate researchers in Research Field 1, his engagement went far beyond the area of "Concepts and Taxonomies." He will be fondly remembered for his productive engagement with many of the URPP's other research areas and for his methodological support for the Ph.D. projects pursued in them.

Ralph read political science, politics, economics and law at both the University of St. Gallen and the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva before broadening his international experience at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa and at Beida. He was employed as a teaching and research assistant at the University of St. Gallen, where he obtained his doctorate in 2007. He continued to teach the history of political ideas and political theory at St. Gallen until his recent appointment in Basel.

During his employment at the URPP, Ralph pursued his habilitation on comparative philosophy, focusing on Chinese philosophical and political

thought, traditional Confucianism and its instrumentalization in China and reception in the West, but also exploring a diverse range of other topics from the Hittites to Xi Jinping. Even with upcoming deadlines for his papers, he always had an open ear for the scientific issues of junior colleagues, who enjoyed the espresso in his office while benefitting from his stimulating advice.

Ralph's interest in interdisciplinary collaboration was also evident in his many teaching activities, such as the well received course on "Political philosophy meets political geography," which he co-taught with geographer Benedikt Korf and political philosopher Urs Marti. Moreover, Ralph was engaged in the URPP Asia and Europe's cooperation with the Centre for African Studies at the University of Basel. And for many years, he led the bi-weekly discussion group of Research Field 1, gathering doctoral students and postdocs from various disciplines and reminding them often of the potential pitfalls of concepts, canons, and comparisons central to their work.

Apart from his prolific teaching activities, Ralph produced a stunning number of publications during his time at the URPP and contributed to the organization of many conferences and workshops, such as "Varieties of Modernity?" (2009) and "What is philosophy" (2011). He also found time for his work as the European book review editor for *Philosophy East and West*, and served as co-chair of the section on political theory for the Swiss Political Science Association.

As members of the URPP Asia and Europe, we hope that Ralph's departure will really just be the beginning of a new phase of cooperation, and, for many of us, friendship. We wish him all the best in his transition to and his work at the University of Basel!

To the Former Directors

From January 2013 to December 2014, Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Behr and Prof. Dr. Angelika Malinar acted as academic directors of the URPP Asia and Europe. They ensured that the members of URPP Asia and Europe had access to the necessary resources for carrying out their research projects. With the support of the head office, they organized two retreats in Vitznau, which allowed intensive discussions within the three research fields of the URPP Asia and Europe and involved fruitful plenary sessions. At the second retreat, the lecture series "Asia and Europe: Actors, Concepts, Narratives" was proposed. This event will take place in the fall semester of 2015, and it will further enhance the visibility of the URPP Asia and Europe at the University of Zurich itself and beyond. In 2013 and 2014, Wolfgang Behr and Angelika Malinar were also instrumental in other conferences that brought together researchers from universities in Europe and Asia, focusing on "Traveling Norms and the Politics of Contention" (2013) and "Asia and Europe in Translation: Interdisciplinary Perspectives" (2014).

During their terms in office, six doctoral theses were submitted and successfully defended. Furthermore, within the same timeframe, members of the URPP Asia and Europe received funding in the amount of 3.5 million Swiss francs, including an ERC Starting Grant. This funding allowed a very welcome extension of the research activities.

On behalf of all at the URPP Asia and Europe, we want to express our deepest gratitude to Wolfgang Behr and Angelika Malinar for all of their endeavors. We are taking over an institution that is in excellent shape and are honored to continue their work.
David Chiavacci and Mareile Flitsch
Academic Directors

A Place far Away

Many doctoral students at the URPP Asia and Europe leave their friends and relatives behind to do their research projects in Switzerland. Why did they decide to come to the University of Zurich and how do they feel being away from their native countries?

Roman Benz

Thiruni Kelegama decided to pursue her doctoral project at the University of Zurich for two main reasons. First, she was offered guidance by Benedikt Korf, a professor of human geography and a member of the URPP Asia and Europe, who, among other things, is a specialist in the political economy of the civil war in Sri Lanka. His knowledge on this topic is very helpful for Thiruni's own project, which deals with governmental development projects and settlement politics both during and after the civil war in Sri Lanka. Secondly, Thiruni was attracted by the academic environment that the URPP Asia and Europe provides through its interdisciplinary approach: "It is extremely interesting and beneficial to talk to scholars from other disciplines and to see how they engage with their

research area." She became acquainted with other theoretical approaches and perspectives, which she considers to have broadened her approach.

Thiruni's research looks at contentious forms of territorialization and settlement politics in northeastern Sri Lanka. Historically, as a largely peripheral scrub land, this area has assumed significance over the past decades as a contentious region between different ethno-political projects, militarized intervention, and claims on land. Focusing on the Sri Lankan government's oldest development project and the highly militarized settlements that resulted from it, her doctoral thesis seeks to understand questions and dynamics related to processes of state formation at the margins of the state.

Having grown up in Sri Lanka, Thiruni has now lived outside of her native country for many years, pursuing studies of English literature and anthropology in New York and London as well as doing research as the SAARC Visiting Fellow at the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses in New Delhi. Although it is always difficult for her to leave behind family

and friends, she admits "that it gets easier with time." She enjoys the whole process of settling in a new country, discovering it for the first time, and making new friends. Yet she is still considering a return to Sri Lanka when she is finished with her graduate studies—on the condition that she has the opportunity to remain in academia.

An opportunity to learn German

After Helena Wu earned her masters degree in comparative literature from the University of Hong Kong, she left her hometown in order to start her doctoral project in Zurich. She came to Europe mainly for her interest in Western theories and philosophy, which form the analytical framework for her research project. Furthermore she seized the opportunity to write her doctoral thesis under the supervision of Andrea Riemenschneider, professor of Chinese studies and member of the URPP Asia and Europe. They met in Hong Kong in December of 2012 and, a few days later, Helena dispatched her application for an open position at the URPP.

Helena appreciates the interdisciplinary approach of the program, which allows her to exchange ideas with doctoral students and professors engaged in different academic disciplines: "Thanks to these interactions, I was able to improve my research design." In her project, she works on Hong Kong cinema and literature after the turn of the millennium with a focus on the representation of place, thing and person in post-colonial Hong Kong.

Initially, it was difficult for her to leave behind friends and relatives. But she always could count on their support. They knew how important it was for her to study abroad. "In the meantime, they are happy, because they can visit me in Switzerland," Helena adds. She enjoys their visits, and she made new friends in Zurich. From



Thiruni Kelegama has pursued her studies in New York, London, and New Delhi before her stay in Zurich.



Helena Wu appreciates the exchange of ideas with URPP members engaged in different academic disciplines.

time to time, she still misses the food she was used to in Hong Kong.

The stay in Zurich gave her the opportunity to learn German. In the first year, she attended an intensive German class to learn the language from scratch. "For the speaking part, I still need to practice," she says. But her time is limited, because she wants to focus first and foremost on her research.

The influence of individual decisions

In her doctoral project, Sofia Bollo compares different exhibition concepts of galleries and museums' sections on Ancient China. Since the comparison includes art and ethnographic museums in Asia and Europe, Zurich turned out to be the ideal place to pursue her research. When she was still applying to other universities with departments focusing only on Chinese studies, her broad comparative approach found little favor, but her proposal was accepted as highly relevant for the URPP Asia and Europe.

After receiving a B.A. in Chinese studies from the University of Turin, Sofia earned a masters degree with a major in ancient Chinese civilization at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. Her doctoral proj-

ect emphasizes museum studies, an emerging discipline that combines art history, anthropology, cultural studies, archaeology, etc. She is pleased that her approach is supported by the interdisciplinary research structure of the URPP. Her first supervisor, Hans B. Thomsen, is professor of East Asian art history, while her second supervisor, Mareile Flitsch, is professor of social and cultural anthropology and director of the university's ethnographic museum: "Both supervisors are really helpful in providing the right theoretical background. They suggest many different readings, so

that I have different points of view that I can combine together."

At first, during an internship at the Museum of East Asian Art in Bath, she came up with the idea of comparing how Chinese curators represent ancient Chinese civilization through object exhibitions and how their European colleagues resolve the same issue. After starting her project, she realized that the geographical distinction between Asia and Europe was not as valid in terms of exhibition practices, because the individual decisions of directors and curators as well as the history of the collection play crucial roles. Even the kind of audience a museum wants to attract is more relevant for the arrangement of the objects than cultural differences between China and Western Europe.

Sofia decided to write a doctoral thesis mainly focusing on museum practices, because she intends to work at a museum later—preferably in Italy, her native country. It was difficult for her to leave behind friends and relatives in Genoa, when it was time for her to pursue her studies in Turin, London, and Zurich: "Probably, it was easier for me when I was in my early twenties." Now she says it feels a bit more complicated, mainly because her husband still lives in Italy.



Sofia Bollo developed her doctoral project by visiting museums in China and in Europe.

New Participating Professors

In the last year, four professors joined the URPP Asia and Europe as participating scholars:



Prof. Dr. Annuska Derks
Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology

Research interests

Migration, labour, and dependency; social change and development; urban life; material culture and commodity chains; gender, sexuality and kinship

Southeast Asia, particularly Vietnam and Cambodia



Prof. Dr. Johannes Quack
Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology

Research interests

Hindu traditions; criticism of religion, (post) secularity and non-religion; ritual theory, action theory and practice theory; medical anthropology, religion and (mental) health / illness; qualitative social research, biographical research; history of the discipline of anthropology and religious studies

South Asia, particularly North India; Europe



Prof. Dr. Francine Giese
Institute of Art History

Research interests

Islamic art and architecture, artistic and cultural heritage of al-Andalus, cross-cultural exchanges (Iberian peninsula/Istanbul/Central Asia), Mudéjar architecture, neo-Islamic architecture in the Islamic world and the West, Orientalism, Spanish national identity debate (20th–21st century), cultural heritage preservation in Spain and the Islamic world



Prof. Dr. Rafael Walthert
Institute of Religious Studies

Research interests

Sociology of religion, ritual theory, systems theory, practice theory

Research projects, among others, on the role of rituals in modern societies, on the Parsi Zoroastrians in Mumbai, on the conversion of church buildings in urban contexts and on alternative religiosity

News

Motaz Alnaouq (legal studies/URPP Asia and Europe) was awarded a Civil Society Scholar Award from the Open Society Foundations for the completion of his doctoral thesis “The Right to Life in the Palestinian Society: The Case of the Death Penalty from Comparative Human Rights Perspective” (September 2014 to February 2015).

Yasmine Berriane (URPP Asia and Europe/ political sociology) was a visiting scholar at the Centre de Recherche, Economie, Société et Culture (CRESC) of the Université Mohamed VI Polytechnique in Rabat (June to July 2014), where she also is an associate researcher (since June 2014). Furthermore, since October 2014, she is an associate member of the research project “Spaces of Participation: Topographies of Political and Social Change in Morocco, Egypt and Palestine” at the Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO) in Berlin.

Ulrich Brandenburg (Islamic and Middle Eastern studies/URPP Asia and Europe) was awarded a Forschungskredit from the University of Zurich for the completion of his doctoral thesis “Japan and Islam 1890–1914: Between Global Communication and Pan-Asiatic Movement” (September 2014 to August 2015).

In March 2015, **Patrick Brozzo** (legal studies/URPP Asia and Europe) completed his doctoral thesis “Marriage in Islamic and Jewish Law: Cultural Diversity and Marital Law.”

In September 2014, **Laura Coppens** (social and cultural anthropology/URPP Asia and Europe) completed her doctoral thesis “Film Activism in Contemporary Indonesia: Queer Autoethnography, Film Festival Politics, and the Subversion of Heteronormativity.” Additionally, she took up a position as an assistant at the Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern, starting in August 2014.

Amir Hamid (Islamic and Middle Eastern studies/URPP Asia and Europe) took up the position as coordinator of the German-Tunisian research project “Tunisia in Transition” at the Institute for the Near and Middle East, LMU Munich, starting in January 2015. The project is funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) with support from the German Foreign Office.

In July 2014, **Pia Hollenbach** (geography/URPP Asia and Europe) completed her doctoral thesis “The Paradox of Good Intentions: The Biography of Private Giving in Post-Tsunami Sri Lanka.”

Lisa Indraco (Chinese studies/URPP Asia and Europe) was awarded a Forschungskredit from the University of Zurich for the completion of her research project “Debate Arena: Argumentation and Persuasion in Warring States Philosophical Discourse” (October 2014 to September 2016).

Eliza Isabaeva (social and cultural anthropology/URPP Asia and Europe) was awarded a fellowship from the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology to continue her dissertation project “Social Citizenship from Below and the Making of State in Kyrgyzstan: Migrants Making a Living in the Squatter Settlements of Bishkek” at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle, starting in October 2014.

Starting in June 2014, **Rohit Jain** (social and cultural anthropology/URPP Asia and Europe) took up a position as a scientific officer at the *NCCR On the Move*, University of Neuchâtel. In October 2014, he completed his doctoral thesis “Between Assimilation, Exoticism and Global Indian Modernity: Transnational Subject-Making of ‘Second Generation Indians’ from Switzerland.”

In February 2015, **Rita Krajnc** (Indian studies/URPP Asia and Europe) completed her doctoral thesis “Freiheit, Individualität und die Etablierung einer weiblichen Künstlerexistenz in Mrdula Garg’s Hindi-

Roman ‘Cittakobra’ (1979) [Freedom, Individuality, and the Establishment of a Female Artist’s Existence in Mrdula Garg’s Hindi Novel ‘Cittakobra’ (1979)]”.

Phillip Lasater (biblical studies/URPP Asia and Europe) took up a position as a research and teaching assistant at the Institute of Theology, University of Zurich, starting in September 2014.

Robert Leach (Indian studies/URPP Asia and Europe) and **Angelika Malinar** (Indian studies/URPP Asia and Europe) received three years’ funding from the Swiss National Science Foundation for their research project “Taxonomies of Religious and Philosophical Knowledge in Classical Sanskrit Literature,” starting in May 2014.

Virginia Leung (Chinese studies/URPP Asia and Europe) and **Andrea Riemenschnitter** (Chinese studies/URPP Asia and Europe) received three years’ funding from the Swiss National Science Foundation for their research project “Coming of Age in Hong Kong: A Study of a Colonial Literary Field in the 1950s,” starting in May 2014.

Christoph Mittmann (URPP Asia and Europe/Japanese studies) was awarded a Young Researchers’ Exchange Program fellowship from the ETH Zurich and the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) for a three-month stay at Tōkai University (January to April 2015).

Shalini Randeria (social and cultural anthropology/URPP Asia and Europe) was appointed as rector of the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM) in Vienna and took office in January 2015. She remains a professor of social anthropology and sociology at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva.

Andrea Riemenschnitter (Chinese studies/URPP Asia and Europe) received a Confucius China Studies Program (CCSP) scholarship to visit Shanghai Fudan University as a senior research fellow in January/February 2015.

Roman Seidel (Islamic and Middle Eastern studies/URPP Asia and Europe) was awarded a POINT PostDoc Fellowship at the Freie Universität Berlin. Starting in February 2015, he took up a position as a postdoc at the Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies.

Almut Höfert (URPP Asia and Europe/history) submitted her habilitation “Kaiser-tum und Kalifat: Der imperiale Monotheismus im Früh- und Hochmittelalter” to the University of Basel and successfully completed her habilitation review in April 2014.

From June to July 2014, **Paola von Wyss-Giacosa** (social and cultural anthropology/URPP Asia and Europe) was invited as a fellow to the Max Weber Center for Advanced Cultural and Social Studies at the University of Erfurt. Furthermore, since November 2014 and until November 2015, she is acting junior professor (50%) for the chair of “Entangled History” at the same institution.

Starting in December 2014, **Ralph Weber** (URPP Asia and Europe/philosophy) accepted a position as an assistant professor (tenure track) of European global studies at the Institute for European Global Studies (Europainstitut) of the University of Basel.

Dagmar Wujastyk (Indian studies/URPP Asia and Europe) was awarded a fellowship from the Research Talent Development Fund of the Zurich University Association from October 2014 to June 2015. Furthermore she was awarded an ERC Starting Grant for her project “Medicine, Immortality, Moksha: Entangled Histories of Yoga, Ayurveda and Alchemy in South Asia,” which she will pursue at the University of Vienna. Starting in July 2015, she accepted a position as an associate professor at the University of Alberta in Edmonton.

Dinah Zank (East Asian art history/URPP Asia and Europe) took up a position as a researcher at the Seminar of East Asian Studies, Freie Universität Berlin, starting in October 2014.

Events 2015

Lectures Series Spring Semester 2015

Constitutional Reform and Social Change in Asia and the Middle East: Law, Politics and Theory

Location: University of Zurich, Main Building, Room KOL F-117, Rämistrasse 71, 8006 Zurich
Organization: Dr. Yasmine Berriane, Prof. Dr. David Chiavacci, Prof. Dr. Matthias Mählmann
A cooperation between the URPP Asia and Europe and the Faculty of Law

March 17, 2015, 18:15–20:00, Guest Lecture
2011 and the Middle East Challenge to World Constitutionalism

Prof. Dr. Chibli Mallat, University of Utah / Saint-Joseph University, Lebanon

April 28, 2015, 18:15–20:00, Guest Lecture
Zwischen anspruchsvollen Erwartungen vom Staat und Repräsentationsdefiziten: Warum akzeptieren viele Japaner den LDP-Entwurf der anti-freiheitlichen Verfassungsrevision?

Prof. Dr. Hiroshi Nishihara, Waseda University

May 7, 2015, 18:15–20:00, Guest Lecture
Assessing the Social Rights Jurisprudence of India: Perspectives from Constitutional Theory and Comparative Law

Prof. Dr. Arun Thiruvengadam, National University of Singapore

May 18, 2015, 18:15–20:00, Guest Lecture
The Law of Nature, the “Intelligible World” and the “Mystery that is to Come” in Ancient Judaism

Prof. Dr. Hindy Najman, Yale University
Location: University of Zurich, Room KIR 200, Kirch-gasse 9, 8001 Zurich
A cooperation between the Department of Theology and the URPP Asia and Europe

May 21, 2015, 14:00–16:00, Guest Lecture
What Makes Middle Aged Women Become Politicized: The Case of Family Members of Political Dissidents in the 1970s and 1980s of South Korea

Prof. Dr. Youngtae Shin (University of Central Oklahoma)
Location: University of Zurich, Room KO2 F-152, Karl Schmid-Strasse 4, 8006 Zurich
A cooperation between the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies – Japanese Studies and the URPP Asia and Europe

June 7–8, 2015, Workshop
Civil Society in Taiwan and Hong Kong: Looking back and Reaching out

Location: University of Zurich, Room SOC 1-106, Rämistrasse 69, 8001 Zurich
Organization: Prof. Dr. Andrea Riemenschnitter, Dr. Simona Grano, lic. phil. Brigit Knüsel
A cooperation between the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies – Chinese Studies, The China Policy Institute, University of Nottingham, and the URPP Asia and Europe

June 12, 2015, Conference
Mythos Orient: Architektur und Ornament im Zeitalter des Orientalismus

Location: Schloss Oberhofen, 3653 Oberhofen am Thunersee

Convenor: Prof. Dr. Francine Giese
A cooperation between the Institute of Art History and the URPP Asia and Europe

September 9–11, 2015, Workshop
Concepts in Transition: Modes and Effects of Change

Location: University of Zurich
Organization: Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Behr, Thomas Hülle, Polina Lukicheva, Christoph Mittmann
A cooperation between the URPP Asia and Europe and the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies – Chinese Studies

September 18–19, 2015, Symposium
Buddhist Japonisme: Negotiating the Triangle of Religion, Art and Nation

Location: Musée d'ethnographie de Genève
Organization: Prof. Dr. Raji Steineck, Dr. Jérôme Ducor, Prof. Dr. Hans Thomsen
A cooperation between the Musée d'ethnographie de Genève, the University of Zurich, and the Hosei University Tokyo.

Starting with September 14, 2015, 16:15–18:00, Topical Lecture Series
“Asia and Europe:” Actors, Concepts, Narratives

Location: University of Zurich, Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies, Rämistrasse 59, 8001 Zurich
Organization: URPP Asia and Europe

October 23–24, 2015, Workshop
Snapshots of Change: Assessing Social Transformations in Qualitative Research

Location: University of Zurich
Convenors: Dr. Yasmine Berriane, Thiruni Kelegama, Dr. Ayman Kreil, Prof. Dr. Dorothea Lüddeckens, Dr. Melek Saral
Organization: URPP Asia and Europe

October 29, 2015, 18:00–20:00, Guest Lecture
Islamic Art for a Christian Society: The Iberian Peninsula in the Middle Ages

Prof. Dr. Ana Echevarría Arsuaga, UNED, Madrid / Visiting Fellow, Institute for Advanced Studies, University of Constance
Location: University of Zurich
A cooperation between the Institute of Art History and the URPP Asia and Europe

November 5–6, 2015, Conference
Activism in Contemporary Japan: New Ideas, Players and Arenas?

Location: University of Zurich
Convenors: Prof. Dr. David Chiavacci, Dr. Julia Obinger
A cooperation between the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies – Japanese Studies and the URPP Asia and Europe

December 12–13, 2015, Workshop
The Means of Love in the Arab World: Pragmatics Beyond Norms and Transgressions

Location: Centre Jacques-Berque, 35, av. Tariq Ibn Ziad, 10020 Rabat, Morocco
Organization: Dr. Baudouin Dupret, Dr. Ayman Kreil, Dr. Maria Malmström, Prof. Zakaria Rhani, Dr. Samuli Schielke
A cooperation between the Centre Jacques-Berque, The Nordic Africa Institute, the URPP Asia and Europe, and the Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO)

Junior Scholars

With the last Fall semester, several doctoral candidates took up their research at the URPP Asia and Europe:

Rasmus Brandt, M.A. (Islamic and Middle Eastern studies)

Islam, Pluralization and Gender: The Tunisian Movement “an-Nahda”

Kathrin Kaufmann, M.A. (art history)

Neo-Islamic Architecture in Tsarist Russia

Nadja Koch, lic.phil. (Islamic and Middle Eastern studies)

Islamic Craftsmen as Transcultural Mediators between al-Andalus and the Kingdom of Castile (12th–15th Centuries)

Polina Lukicheva, M.A. (Chinese studies)

The Concepts of Space and Methods of Composition in the Chinese Literati Theories of Art in the Seventeenth Century

Elika Palenzona-Djalili, lic.phil. (Islamic and Middle Eastern studies)

Historienmalerei im qāğārischen Iran: Persische Malerei der Henri Moser Sammlung in Bern

Nina Rageth, M.A. (religious studies)

Medical Pluralism in Contemporary South India: Religion, Tradition and Competing Medical Systems

Anusooa Sivaganesan, MLaw (legal studies)

Forced to Marry – A Human Rights’ Violation within its Euro-Asian Entanglements: Unfree Marriages from a Multi-Country Perspective Exemplified by Switzerland, Great Britain, Holland, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Turkey

Urs Weber, M.A. (religious studies)

Governmental Discourse and Ritual Change: The Introduction of Cremation in Taiwan